

**Environmental Quality Incentive Program Delivery in  
Washington County, Maine  
First Application Evaluation and Ranking Period of FY 2013**

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) offers financial assistance to agricultural producers to implement on-farm conservation practices. Eligibility is determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Eligible producers may apply for financial assistance on conservation practices that will address identified resource concerns on eligible land.

Interested agricultural producers may apply in person at the Machias USDA Service Center. Applicants may also request EQIP assistance by telephone, FAX, e-mail, or letter. Send to: David Garcelon, District Conservationist, NRCS, 8 M&M Place, suite 5B, Machias, Maine, phone number (207) 255-3995 extension 3, Fax number (207) 255-0936, or email [dave.garcelon@me.usda.gov](mailto:dave.garcelon@me.usda.gov).

**Objective:** The objective of the Washington County Local Work Group is to utilize EQIP to promote the use of conservation practices to benefit the environment while promoting sustainable agriculture and maintaining open farmland.

**Priority Resource Concerns:** In Washington County, the Local Work Group (LWG) has identified and prioritized the following resource concerns:

**HIGH** – Water Quality, Air Quality, Soil Erosion

**MEDIUM** - Wildlife Habitat, Forest Health

**Eligible Practices and Payment Rates:** For a list of practices eligible for EQIP financial assistance in fiscal year 2013, see **Washington County Eligible Practices and Payment Rate List**.

**Sign-up:** All program sign-up is continuous and applications may be taken at any time. Sign-up will be conducted according to local priorities and grouped along the lines of the resource areas that the State Technical Committee defined and that the LWG have recommended be funded in 2013.

For each funding cycle, a cutoff date will be established to provide time for screening and ranking. Applications received after the cutoff date will be considered for the next funding cycle.

Conservation practices (both structural and management) in Forestland will be eligible for inclusion in a cost share contract only when a Forest Stewardship Plan, or other forest management plan that meets the State of Maine Stewardship Plan standard, has been developed for the acres to be enrolled in the program. For applications involving animal waste management such as waste storage facilities, milking center waste water treatment system, and heavy use area protection, the development of a comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP) is recommended but not required prior to funding. There may be opportunities for financial assistance to obtain these specific types of plans. Landowners should contact the office to request assistance and information.

**Ranking:** All eligible applications received prior to the funding cycle cutoff date will be screened. Those determined to be High priority will be ranked based on an on-site resource inventory and assessment. Planners will develop alternative measure to address resource concerns based on their assessment and work with the applicant to come to decisions for practice application. Ranking will be based on the decisions the applicant makes for addressing the resource concerns.

The combined ranking sheet for Washington County, which incorporates resource concerns and applicable quality criteria from the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide is the basis for ranking applications. A single combined ranking sheet will be completed for each farm or planning/contract area. Points will be assigned for those resource concerns that are not meeting quality criteria in the benchmark condition and will be improved as a result of implementation of the client's contract.

Applications will be selected for contracting in ranked order by resource area, according to the score, as available funds allow. If available funds are insufficient to contract all eligible applications, applications may be held (deferred) and considered for funding with any subsequently received applications during FY 2013 if another application ranking period is announced.

**Funding:** Periodic requests for program allocations will be scheduled throughout the year as funding permits. Separate program requests will be submitted by the District Conservationist according to the resource areas that the State Technical Committee defined and that the LWG has recommended be funded in 2013. Each of these requests will constitute a separate pool of ranked applications.

Allocation decisions to each Field Office will be made in the State Office based on national, state and local priorities, and the nature and extent of requests. Field Office Allocations will be split between each of the resource categories based on percentages set by the LWG, as shown below. Unfunded applications will be deferred to the next program request date.

**Fund Pools:** The Washington County Local Work Group has decided to allocate the available EQIP funds as follows for the first Application Evaluation and Ranking Period of FY2013:

<b>Resource Category</b>	<b>% of Local Allocated Funding</b>
Animal Waste	6
Cropland	86
Pasture	8

If you have any questions about how EQIP will be delivered in Washington County, please contact David Garcelon, District Conservationist at (207) 255-3995 ext 3.